

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 IO-11 AID-05 ACDA-05 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 SAM-01 TRSE-00

MC-02 EB-07 /108 W

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R 051330Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4468

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABADD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMENKASSY KATHMANDU

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USUN NEW YORK 1977

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: MRS. GANDHI ON JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING

SUMMARY: IN A LONG INTERVIEW WITH PRO-COMMUNIST EDITOR R.K. KARANJIA OF THE WEEKLY BLITZ (MARCH 6), PM GANDHI RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS ON A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECT. THESE ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW, NOT IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY OCCURRED BUT BY SUBJECT CATEGORY. THE US DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE COME UP IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION. END SUMMARY.

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1. (A) OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN INDIA: "NOW THERE ARE ELEMENTS OUTSIDE WHO ARE ENCOURAGING SEPARATIST AND DIVISIVE TENDENCIES AMONG PEOPLE. THERE IS ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO STANDS FOR SEPARATE SIKHISTAN AND HE IS GETTING AWAY WITH ALL THE PUBLICITY DUE TO A MASS MOVEMENT. AND NOW THEY ARE ENCOURAGING SOMEBODY ELSE WHO STANDS FOR SEPARATE TAMIL NADU. THIS KIND OF THING IS GOING ON INCREASING ALL THE TIME; IN FACT THEY ARE GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO PUSH UP SUCH INDIVIDUALS AND GIVE THEM PROMINENCE, MONEY AND OTHER HELP ABROAD."

(B) NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE: "IT IS ALWAYS EMBARRASSING TO BE ASKED TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE. I THINK WE SHOULD RESIST SUCH TEMPTATIONS BECAUSE WHENEVER A SPECIAL LIME-LIGHT IS TURNED ON INDIA, IT HAS AROUSED UNNECESSARY SUSPICIONS AGAINST US IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND CREATED DIFFICULTIES. YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED THAT THE OUTSIDE INTEREST IN INDIA, ALSO, HAS BEEN MUCH GREATER SINCE OUR GAINS IN THE 1971 ELECTIONS, FOLLOWED BY BANGLADESH AND SO ON. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE INDIA'S FULL FAITH IN NON-ALIGNMENT. IT HAS A SPECIAL ROLE IN ENSURING THAT THE DETENTE BECOMES DEEPER AND MORE WIDESPREAD. APART FROM THIS, THERE IS A NEW RULE FOR THE NON-ALIGNED AND THAT IS OUR WORK FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY AMONGST NATIONS..." (RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ON THE CONCEPT OF AN INTERANTIONAL INCOME TAX TO BALANCE OFF THE AFFLUENT AND POOR, MRS. GANDHI SAID): "IT WON'T WORK. YOU HAVE TO THINK OF THINGS THAT ARE FEASIBLE AND PRACTICAL.EVEN WITH THE LITTLE THAT WE HAVE DONE, THERE IS SO MUCH ANTIPATHY IN THE UN AND SO ON."

(C) CHINA: "I ALWAYS HESITATE TO FORECAST THINGS. IT JUST SHOWS THAT THINGS ARE NOT ALL SMOOTH IN CHINA AS MANY PEOPLE WERE TRYING TO MAKE OUT, IN SPIE OF THE FACT THAT WE ALWAYS FELT THAT THEY WERE NOT. BUT THERE HAS BEEN A DEPENDENCY IN THE WEST TO ACCEPT WHATEVER THE CHINESE SAY ON ANY MATTER. BUT CHINA WAS A BAD NATION, AN OLD NATION, AND IT IS SURE TO FIND ITS FEET. WE HOPE THAT IT WILL GO BACK TO ITS OLD IDEAS WHICH WERE TO WORK FOR PEACE."

(D) PALESTINE: (IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION):
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"IF WE WERE CLEAR, IF WE KNEW THAT INITIATIVE WOULD WORK, THEN WE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE. BUT I MUST CONFESS THAT I DO NOT REALLY SEE ANYTHING TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK. NOT NOW."

(E) BANGLADESH: " I WOULD NOT LIKE TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT BANGLADESH WHICH CAN BE CONSTRUED AS UNHELPFUL ATTITUDE BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT PHASE. IT IS A

FACT THAT THE CHINESE ARE ENCOURAGING ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS
IN A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA."
(THIS IN RESPONSE TO A LEADING QUESTION ABOUT CHINESE
GUERRILLA EXPERTS BEING SMUGGLED INTO BANGLADESH AS DIPLOMATS
AND PAKISTANI ARMS BEING UNLOADED AS FOOD SHIPMENT.)

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(F) PAKISTAN: (IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY ABOUT
OPPOSITION LEADER BADSHAH KHAN IN PAKISTAN); "THE WORLD
WAS SILENT ABOUT ALL THE MURDERS IN BANGLADESH TOO. THEY
JUST MENTIONED THEM AS A NEWS ITEM. BUT THERE WAS THIS
CAMPAIGN OF CRITICISM AGAINST US THAT IS STILL

(#)

I FEEL
CONCERNED BECAUSE HE WAS A PART OF OUR FREEDOM MOVEMENT.
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HE IS A GREAT PERSONALITY AND HE HAS SACRIFICED HIS WHOLE
LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE. WE ALL WISH HIM WELL."

2. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS:

(A) ON BUILDING A NATIONAL CONSENSUS: MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE MAKING MOVES. BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW REPRESENTATIVE THEY ARE OR HOW CLOSELY IN TOUCH THEY ARE WITH WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE EMERGENCY OR WHAT THE SITUATION IS TODAY." (COMMENT: THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN IMPLIED REBUKE OF ACHARYA VINOBE BHAVE WHO SPOKE WITH THE PM TEN DAYS AGO ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN HERSELF AND THE OPPOSITION.) "CAN WE SAY THAT THE DANGERS WHICH EXISTED ARE PAST? I MEAN, CAN WE SAY THAT THE OPPOSITION HAS REALIZED THAT THEY HAVE NO POPULAR SUPPORT? THE HARD CORE REMAINS, THE RSS, THE ANAND MARG...AND I DON'T THINK THEY HAVE CHANGED THEIR VIEWS AT ALL. WE HAVE NOT HAD THE TIME TO CONSOLIDATE ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS, NOT JUST THE ECONOMIC PROGRAMS BUT CHANGE OF ATTITUDES." "IT IS DIFFICULT TO HAVE CONSENSUS AMONGST ENTIRELY AND DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSING POINTS OF VIEW."

(B) ON THE CONSTITUTION: "I PERSONALLY THINK THAT NOT MUCH NEEDS TO BE CHANGED...WHAT HAD HAPPENED HERE WAS REALLY NOT A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS OR A CONSTITUTIONAL FAILURE. IT WAS A PURE AND SIMPLE POLITICAL CHALLENGE TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND IT HAD BEEN MET POLITICALLY WELL WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF OUR CONSTITUTION. BUT THERE MIGHT HAVE TO BE A FEW CHANGES. WE DO NOT WANT TO RUSH INTO THEM. THE PROCESS OF DEBATE HAS BEGUN."

(C) THE EMERGENCY: "FOREIGNERS WHO READ ABOUT THE EMERGENCY IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES IMAGINE THAT THE POLICE AND THE MILITARY WOULD BE PATROLLING OUR STREETS. BUT WHEN THEY COME HERE THEY ARE ASTONISHED TO SEE THAT THERE WAS NO USE OF FORCE AND THAT IN FACT THERE IS NO SHOW OF FORCE WHATSOEVER ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY...THE POLICE HAVE HAD LESS WORK SINCE THE EMERGENCY THAN EVER BEFORE...SO, AFTER A LONG TIME, THE ATMOSPHERE HAS BECOME RELAXED. WE HAVE MADE ARRESTS, BUT MANY HAVE BEEN RELEASED. SOME TOP PEOPLE AND SOME LOCAL ORGANIZERS AT FIELD LEVEL CONTINUE TO BE
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UNDER DETENTION. THE OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF THESE BELONG TO THE BANNED ORGANIZATIONS...THE PARLIAMENT HAS MET TWICE... STATE ASSEMBLIES TOO ARE FUNCTIONING. THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT IS BEING CONDUCTED A LITTLE MORE EFFICIENTLY. THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION IS ALSO PROCEEDING MORE SMOOTHLY. THE ECONOMY ITSELF HAS VASTLY IMPROVED." "ON THE WHOLE, PEOPLE ARE COOPERATINGWHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF ITEMS OF OUR 20-POINT PROGRAM AND OTHER PROGRAMS." "BUT OUR GAINS ARE STILL TOO NEW TO BE FRITTERED AWAY...WE CANNOT RELAX THE FIGHT AGAINST SMUGGLERS AND BLACK MARKETEERS (OR) AGAINST INFLATION. BUT WE ARE TAKING A MORE LIBERAL ATTITUDE IN REGARD TO LAW AND ORDER."

(D) THE OPPOSITION: "UNRECONCILED SECTIONS REMAIN. SOME OPPOSITION POLITICIANS, SOME NEWSPAPER PEOPLE, PART OF THE BUREAUCRACY, PART OF THE RICH, ESPECAILLY THE NEW RICH. THE OPPOSITION WAS BEING SUSTAINED BY PRESS STORIES THAT THEY HAD ENORMOUS FOLLOWING IN THE COUNTRY AND NOW THEY WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THESE LOST ARMIES. SOME NEWSMEN ALSO FEEL THAT THEIR POWER HAS EVAPORATED.

(E) CENSORSHIP: "PRECENSORSHIP HAD TO BE ENFORCED ONLY IN A FEW CASES. NORMALLY EDITORS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO USE THEIR OWN BETTER JUDGMENT. PERSONALLY, I AM NOT FOR CENSORSHIP AT ALL, BUT THE HOME AND INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING MINISTRIES HAVE THEIR OWN DIFFICULTIES. SO WE WILL DISCUSS IT AGAIN. I ALWAYS HAVE TOLD THEM TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE EDITORS OF NEWSPAPERS."
SAXBE

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